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Photo by John Gilhooley
Design by Richie Beckman

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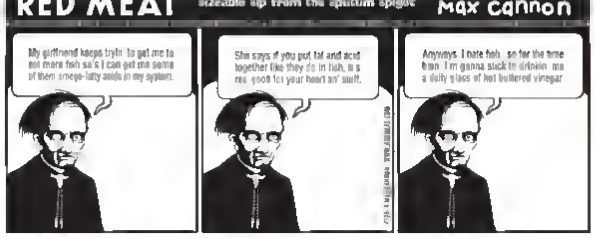
RED MEAT

sizeable sip from the spittum spigot

from the secret files of Max Cannon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She says it you put fat and acid together like they do in fish, it is real good for your heart an' stuff.
Anyways, I hate fish, so for the time bein' I'm gonna stick to drinkin' me a daily glass of hot buttered vinegar

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Onward Cannabis Soldiers

Pot bust harshes the mellow Sunday Sacraments at the Church of Peace and Glory

a clockwork ORANGE

» MATT COKER

The Devil's weed was sold illegally at the Church of Peace and Glory, sayeth the Law California's new Bureau of Cannabis Control (BCC) participated in the arrest of Omid Delkash, who is accused of operating an unlawful marijuana dispensary in the Costa Mesa location that has a sign on the window that reads, "Sacramental services every Sunday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m."

Delkash, 47, of Newport Beach, was charged Aug. 27 with four misdemeanor counts of unlawful transportation, sale and furnishing marijuana, according to a joint statement from the BCC, the Orange County district attorney's office, Costa Mesa's Police and Code Enforcement departments, the California Department of Taxes and Fee Administration, and the state Department of Consumer Affairs' Division of Investigation-Cannabis Enforcement Unit.

In March, the Church of Peace and Glory opened at 1673 Irvine Ave., Ste K (for Kush?), Costa Mesa, and it has been listed as a marijuana dispensary on WeedMaps and other sources ever since. The spot is in the Irvine Center strip mall near Irvine Avenue and 17th Street that includes a 7-Eleven and, across the parking lot, La Cave restaurant. Newport Harbor High School is also nearby.

Costa Mesa's Measure X forbids any type of retail sales of marijuana and/or cannabis products within city boundaries, including the medical variety. With a city-issued business license, wholesale medical-marijuana distributing, manufacturing, processing, transporting, as well as laboratory research and development can be conducted. California law requires a license from one of the state's three cannabis-licensing authorities before undertaking any commercial marijuana activity. Enforcement of the state law can be undertaken by state or local law enforcement.

"Citizen complaints," according to the joint agencies' statement, led to a Costa Mesa Police Special Investigations Unit probe of the Church of Peace and Glory beginning in May, when two citations for unlawfully operating a marijuana dispensary were issued. But Delkash allegedly sold marijuana to customers there on May 9 and June 5 and 14—the same day he did a walk-through with Costa Mesa Code Enforcement and claimed he was not operating as a marijuana dispensary—as well as July 17.

PEACE BE UNTO YOU

MATT COKER

After a search warrant was served on Aug. 24, marijuana, edibles and tobacco products were confiscated at the Church of Peach and Glory, according to the authorities. Delkash was arrested that day without incident and held on $150,000 bail before his arraignment.

There are now signs on the glass windows in front of the Church of Peace and Glory stating, "Do Not Enter" with the phone number of Irvine Center Management.

Where's your messiah now?

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Referred to the OCDA, where it will die a swift and silent death."

—Paul Lucas, longtime reader of the Weekly, commenting on Liam Blume's Aug. 30 ocweekly.com story, "Fullerton Police Chief Chokehold Case Goes to the DA's Office"

THE REAL PORN STAR OF ORANGE COUNTY

Alexa Curtin is known for three things. 1) being the daughter of ex-*Real Housewives of Orange County* cast member and certified hot mess Lynne Curtin; 2) once being a "barely legal" porn star (under the name Jayden Taylors); and 3) being awarded $2.25 million in a lawsuit against Orange County and Sheriff's Deputy Nicholas Lee Caropino, who the jury found had sexually assaulted her.

Now, the 24-year-old is intertwined again with the Orange County Sheriff's Department, which recently hosted Curtin at the Central Women's Jail because of three separate cases against her. Curtin's troubles began on Halloween night 2017, when she got into a fight with her boyfriend in a Santa Ana parking lot, took his keys, tagged his vehicle to the tune of $400 in damage, then took off with his keys, according to police. She was charged with misdemeanor vandalism and petty theft charges, but she was slapped with a bench warrant on Feb. 8 after she failed to show up in court.

Later that same month, she was arrested for allegedly possessing heroin-covered paraphernalia, and in April, she was popped on suspicion of driving under the influence of drugs.

A call about a suspicious vehicle brought out police, who found her and another female inside earlier this month. That's when Curtin's outstanding warrants from court cases she failed to show up for were discovered, and she was cuffed and booked into the county jail, where she was listed as being unemployed.

Curtin was released Aug. 12 after four days behind bars, then taken to court, where she pleaded not guilty in three separate cases to possession of a controlled substance paraphernalia, vandalism, petty theft and driving under the influence of a drug. She posted a $5,000 bond and is due back in court in October.

This was not Curtin's first time in lockup. She was arrested in 2015 for stealing from Macy's and assaulting a woman, and she was later sentenced to 30 days in jail for an unspecified probation violation.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

POLITICAL FOOTBALL

» STEVE LOWERY

Jacksonville Jaguars v. New York Giants

JACKSONVILLE UPDATE: Last week, Ron DeSantis, who represents the suburbs outside Jacksonville, won Florida's Republican primary for governor utilizing TV ads showing him helping his daughter "build a wall" made of paper bricks and reading Donald Trump's *Art of the Deal* to his infant son, we assume junior will next be introduced to the beloved indoctrinated kids' classic *Oh, the Places You'll Be Deported To!* DeSantis immediately attacked his Democratic opponent, Tallahassee mayor Andrew Gillum, saying the people of Florida don't want Gillum to "monkey this up." Oh, did we mention that Gillum is African-American? Yup. This was after DeSantis back-handedly complimented Gillum on being "articulate," prompting accusations that he was using "racist dog whistles" to fire up his aptly named base. DeSantis said the dog-whistle claim was gross and unfair—it is, to dogs—while his monkey comment was just one of those common phrases people use in Florida, like "I had to: I thought he had a gun."

NEW YORK UPDATE: New Yorkers are getting ready to vote for a governor themselves, and while the campaign doesn't have any vile, racist overtones, it is completely stupid and dumb and childish. The Democratic primary is a showdown between incumbent Governor Andrew Cuomo and actress Cynthia Nixon, who debated the other day—*debated* being a debatable description since the event almost immediately devolved into shouting, insults and name calling. Nixon: "Can you stop lying?" Cuomo: "Yeah, as soon as you do." It's what New Yorkers call "living."

UPON FURTHER REVIEW: DeSantis' monkey comment is not out of character—or lack thereof—at all. In fact, he was recently outed as being an administrator on a Facebook page that, among other things, compared Black Lives Matter activists and Parkland shooting survivors to Hitler and kneeling NFL players to ISIS. Several years ago, he wrote a book called *Dreams From Our Founding Fathers*. It was a response to Barack Obama's *Dreams From My Father*, which featured on its cover photos of Obama with his relatives, several of whom are not white. DeSantis answered that with a book cover featuring a cavalcade of white dudes, at least one of whom owned slaves: it's what the alt-right calls "aspirational marketing."

ROOT FOR: Hmmmm, you hear that whistle? Go Giants!

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dana watch»

R.I.P., GOP?

» MATT COKER

The FBI, Secret Service and U.S. intelligence agencies in 2015 blamed sophisticated attacks of computers at the State Department and other sensitive parts of the White House on Russian hackers who were likely working for that country's President Vladimir Putin.

A year later, after Wikileaks released emails belonging to the Democratic National Committee and other American notables, U.S. intelligence and private sector analysts concluded the cyber messages had been obtained through hacking originating in Russia.

That prompted Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Armed Services Committee to call for an investigation into Russian attempts to influence the presidential election. The committee's chairman, Senator John McCain (R-Arizona), said on Dec. 31, 2016, that stronger sanctions must be imposed on Russia, which the U.S. was already penalizing financially over invasions of sovereign nations and the suspicious deaths of Putin foes. "When you attack a country," McCain told Reuters, "it's an act of war."

Let us compare that stance by McCain, who was laid to rest last week as a genuine American patriot, with what Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-Putin's House plant) was saying in December 2016. Rumored to be a Secretary of State candidate for then-incoming President Donald Trump, the congressman accused a reporter from the former Soviet satellite state Moldova of being "biased." Why? Because the journo asked Rohrabacher about Russia's human-rights abuses, which he labeled "baloney."

Asked the following day about Rohrabacher's stand, McCain replied, "There's a lunatic fringe in every organization."

Their differences emerged again this year after Trump's eyebrow-raising news conference during the July 16 summit with Putin.

"Today's press conference in Helsinki was one of the most disgraceful performances by an American president in memory," McCain said.

ROB AUL

Meanwhile, Rohrabacher told Bloomberg television, "The Russians ... found it in their interest to meddle in our election. But the point is, we meddle in their elections. We meddle all over the world at a much higher rate than what Moscow does."

The McCain-Rohrabacher rift went back years. In early 2008, Rohrabacher endorsed Mitt Romney in the Republican presidential primary over McCain. "He's been the enemy of those of us who have stemmed the flow of illegals into our country," Rohrabacher said of McCain, who would go on to win the GOP nomination.

That November, when Barack Obama won the presidency, Rohrabacher told the dejected crowd at the Orange County GOP election night party in Irvine, "John McCain did not represent the heart and soul of the Republican Party. *We* are the heart and soul of the Republican Party."

This November, we'll find out if the heart and soul of the Republican Party is represented by McCain or Rohrabacher.

Got Dana Watch fodder? Email mcoker@ocweekly.com

HEY YOU!

» ANONYMOUS

Bad Bag

ROB AUL

You are the ugly, green carry-on bag my family and I relied on for years. After decades of meritorious service, your first sign of advanced age was the zipper handle that would come off in my hand—as well as the TSA agent's after she opened you at the secondary bag check at John Wayne Airport. (The agent who had first scanned you on the monitor flagged you because she could not figure out what a plastic wrapper in a pocket was.) Shortly after arriving at my destination, you called it quits for good by having your zipper track completely detach from your right side, exposing everything inside until I could get to where I could purchase a replacement. I'd honor your lengthy service had you not embarrassingly exposed my undies to the flying world.

HEY YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

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IHSS in DISTRESS

The county's home-core progrom is plogued by poor poy ond shortoges os OC continues to oge

By Gabriel San Román

Monique Taloa pulls out a drawer that's full with her sister's prescription bottles. She sits down at the kitchen table of her Buena Park home and methodically sorts pills into a large plastic box with compartments as deep as an ice tray's. "It is very complex because I don't want to make a mistake," Taloa says, her shimmering bracelets clanking on the table. "What happened with Tonya is that the doctor removed her from almost 19 medications and lowered the dosages of everything that she is on to the bare minimum because she was so drugged-up."

That's just one of many improvements Tonya Ginn—who suffers from a mental illness and seizures and has hydrocephalus, a condition more commonly known as "water on the brain"—has experienced since leaving a nursing home in 2012. As an In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) provider, there's never a typical day on the job for Taloa, but most begin early in the morning with personal-care services such as hygiene, an hours-long task. She also does the bedding, laundry and prepares meals for her sister, finely dicing up foods because Ginn's teeth are mere fragments protruding from her gums.

All that doesn't count managing her sister's behavioral episodes whenever they arise.

Being a home-care provider isn't a thankless job. Ginn, wearing a purple flower in her hair to match her tank top, is proud of her sister—and of the card she made to thank her. Taloa takes a break to retrieve it from an improvised letter holder. "When I get discouraged, because care providers sometimes get exhausted, I go back and read this card to remind me why I'm doing this," she says. "You're a social worker. You're a nurse. You're everything that they need you to be."

But not everyone sees it that way—or has a tangible reminder of being needed. With low wages and a lengthy enrollment process delaying first paychecks by six weeks or longer, the program's shortages of providers for North and South County isn't hard to fathom. Represented by United Domestic Workers of America (UDW), IHSS providers make $11 per hour. The union is currently in a prolonged fight with the county to improve pay contracts and other working conditions, but negotiations with the Board of Supervisors, who set the wages, are at an impasse.

All the while, IHSS became a seemingly unlikely player in a larger war against public-sector unions waged by the Koch Brothers-linked Freedom Foundation. The nonprofit zeroed in on UDW's dues, waging an ongoing campaign to have home-care providers opt out of union membership. As the political battles continue, a new test for IHSS looms in a county full of aging baby boomers.

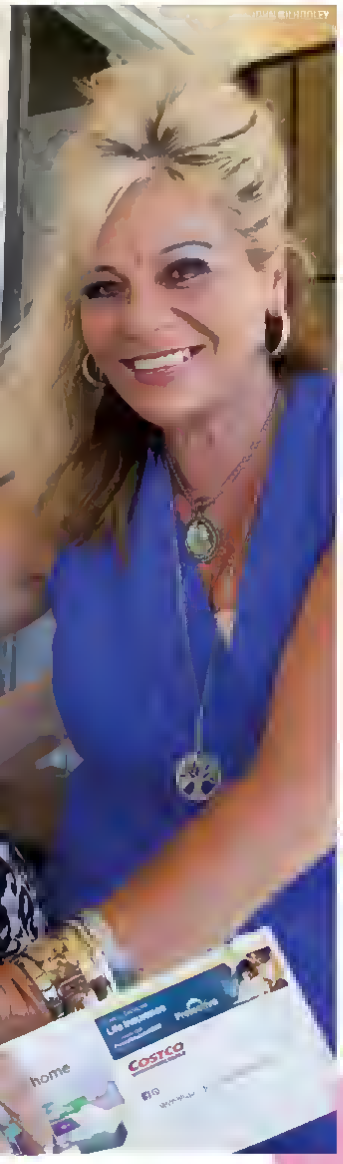
"Orange County's population, at least of those who are older than 60 years old, is going to grow by double digits over the next decade or so," said An Tran, a division director with the county's Social Services Agency, during a recent IHSS roundtable hosted by Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva. "As Orange County ages, I would imagine that the service demand for types of services such as IHSS will continue to grow as well."

As of late May, there are 25,033 home-care providers for 31,504 eligible recipients. How an expected increase in demand will be met is an important question for not only the county's disabled and elderly residents, but also the home-care providers by their side.

"Long-term care services aren't something we think about when we're 25 and we're healthy and able," says Bhumit Shah, a personal-assistant-services coordinator at the Dayle McIntosh Center, an advocacy group for people with disabilities. "But as we all get older, we develop illnesses and disabilities or a combination of both. It's very important to have a robust system in place that protects a person's quality of life and keeps them comfortable in their own environment."

Before becoming the Gipper in Chief, California Governor Ronald Reagan

GINN NEEDS HANDS-ON CARE



signed legislation in 1973 that laid the foundation for people with disabilities to live at home, rather than be institutionalized or kept in nursing homes. Activists with the independent-living movement claimed a hard-fought victory. The labor movement caught up six years later when the newly formed United Domestic Workers of America won its first contract in the state for home-care providers.

But through the decades, IHSS has suffered from flaws that continue to burden it. In the past, those in need of home-care providers found consistent care difficult with high turnover rates. Back then, workers had no employer of record and struggled with minimum-wage pay. Legislation passed in 1999 established a new model for IHSS, with Public Authority agencies being the employer, clearing a path for collective bargaining. OC followed by establishing its own agency in 2002.

Forty-five years after the birth of IHSS, home-care providers have only recently won overtime and paid-sick-leave benefits. A more livable wage in OC, though, proves even more elusive.

On May 8, a sea of green shirts populated the grounds outside the Orange County Board of Supervisors building in downtown Santa Ana. Home-care providers, disabled clients and union organizers turned out more than a year after contract negotiations began to send the board a clear message about higher pay and better benefits.

"In three years, we want home-care providers to be making $14 an hour," Donta Harrison, UDW's regional coordinator in OC, says through a bullhorn.

His statement is met by workers chanting, "Raise! Raise! Raise!"

"Today is the day that they can give home-care providers the $14 an hour they need to take care of their clients," Harrison adds. "We are also asking the county to make sure everyone has adequate safety equipment and supplies. You deserve the same respect as any other worker in the state of California."

But the all-Republican board met the mobilization with a collective shrug.

Just down the street from the rally, at the two-story building where UDW makes its headquarters, Harrison pointed out the problems and solutions from the union's perspective on how to improve the lot of its members and IHSS itself. "One of our fixes is offer people more than minimum wage," he says. "They have to make this job more attractive; otherwise, you're going to have an aging population that people are just going to forget about."

With that in mind, the union proposal calls for boosting hourly wages up to $11.50 this year and $14 by 2020. "I'm not sure if it's an ideology they're subscribing to," Harrison says of supervisors' inaction. "It is very much giving off the appearance that they just don't care for poor people."

OC's Board of Supervisors declined to comment for this story, with one citing ongoing negotiations with the union and UDW's filing of an unfair labor practice (ULP) complaint against the county.

The May rally signaled that members are fed up with the impasse. Union reps also criticize the county for refusing to make its own smaller funding contribution, tapping into $95 million in state and federal funds approved for wages and health insurance. They recall better relations with the county until the Freedom Foundation began eyeing UDW's membership rolls. But collected dues help to fuel a legislative agenda. Citing a statewide growth in the senior population, from 5.2 million to 8.4 million by 2030, UDW, in concert with other organizations, is pushing a "Care Agenda for California" in the form of recruiting half a million home-care workers by 2020.

The county acknowledges shortages. "SSA's IHSS program and the IHSS Public Authority continue to strive to meet the needs of all current and future IHSS recipients," spokeswoman Laura Turtzer writes on behalf of both agencies. "The IHSS program is a state and federally regulated program. Orange County implements the program in accordance with these regulations. As a result, we collaborate with our sister counties in order to communicate with the state the need for additional funding in order to be compensatory with program growth."

Until then, a simple truism remains. "They can't find providers who are willing to do the job," Harrison says. "South County seniors are suffering."

CARE-PROVIDER PRIDE

GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

The battle between public-sector unions and the Freedom Foundation finds an unlikely venue at an IHSS Advisory Committee meeting one afternoon. Sam Han, the foundation's California director, already claims a small victory of sorts just by walking into the drab County of Orange Social Services Agency building in Santa Ana. Last year, Han's small legion of canvassers tried distributing fliers urging home-care providers on their way to orientation to pass on joining the union. When UDW officers became aware of the situation, they confronted the canvassers, county counsel responded by banishing canvassers to the public sidewalk.

Those contentious fliers rest next to agenda packets for committee members and guests to pick up. Han is first up on the agenda and briefs the group on the history of the Freedom Foundation's efforts to inform home-care providers in OC of their ability to opt out of union membership.

A promised showdown with UDW never materializes. Instead, Han faces his fiercest criticism from Kristine Loomis, a visiting Riverside County IHSS Advisory Committee member. Loomis brought her power wheelchair to a standing position while addressing Han, who spun around in his seat to listen attentively. "I was disabled in midlife, and when that happened, there was no union representation for IHSS," Loomis says. "I haven't heard you say anything about what your organization does to protect us. I lived through years when the government would have decimated IHSS. It really was the union that stopped that from happening."

Han trots a statistic of $90 million in statewide annual dues collected by IHSS provider unions in response. "For what purpose?" he asks. "To lobby the government for increased benefits and wages."

"But that's very important," Loomis responds with an amused chuckle. "We need that."

A 30-year-old Korean-American whose father is a pastor at Grace Ministries in Fullerton, Han joined the Freedom Foundation in 2017, a year

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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IHSS in DISTRESS

» FROM PAGE 11

after it set up shop in Tustin and immediately targeted UDW. "The IHSS workers themselves are taking care of their mother, father and son," Han says. "It's a lot of work. They're not getting compensated for the full amount that they're working. That's the point, right?"

For Han, putting more money in home-care providers' pockets doesn't come by way of collective bargaining, but rather by opting out of union membership and its dues. "I help them get $50 a month," he says. "That's the greatest job in the world."

The Freedom Foundation's legal arm also finds home-care providers like Garden Grove's Marie DaRe who claim UDW fraudulently signed them up. DaRe's favorable settlement in the case inspired an onslaught of new lawsuits against IHSS unions.

Of course, legal battles and activism also undercut the union's political influence in California—one loyal to the Democratic Party. "You can't do any advancement on these Left Coast states without dealing with the union issue and their stranglehold on the legislative process," Han says. "The only way to loosen that grip is to go after their money. It's actually taxpayer money, which I think is absolutely ridiculous."

> "THE ONLY WAY TO LOOSEN THAT GRIP IS TO GO AFTER THEIR MONEY," HAN SAYS. " IT'S AC TUALLY TAX-PAYER MONEY, WHICH I THINK IS ABSOLUTELY RIOICULOUS."

The Freedom Foundation's crusade against public-sector unions got a big boost from the Supreme Court's *Harris v Quinn* ruling in 2014. The majority opinion held that home-care providers in Illinois weren't "full-fledged public employees" and couldn't be compelled to join a union as a condition of their employment. The Freedom Foundation tried to take that message into IHSS orientations in Santa Ana, but the county rebuffed Han's request for five minutes' time. The nonprofit responded by pushing for the county to change orientation language concerning union membership. In January, the Board of Supervisors discussed the matter during a closed session under the perceived threat of litigation.

County counsel literally flipped the script. In the past, if providers asked about the union presentation during orientation, officials noted it wasn't mandatory but encouraged workers to attend. Regarding membership? "Optional, not mandatory." Now, without any prompting, the script emphasizes opt-out rights and no longer encourages providers to attend union orientation.

The union accuses the county of collusion with the Freedom Foundation and filed a ULP with the Public Employment Relations Board. "They created a specter and used the language verbatim," Harrison says. Within two days of that closed session, Han released a statement saying they won. "I'm wondering if any other third-party group can just send an email to county supervisor staff and get that level of cooperation."

Han denies any notion of collusion. The group is now pretty much done with IHSS in OC after reaching out to about 700 workers. It's also emboldened by this summer's Supreme Court decision in the *Janus* case, which holds that nonunion workers can't be forced to pay fees to public-sector unions. "It's almost like this prophetic journey," he says, bringing his hands slowly together. "We're coming into alignment with history."

Demetria Watkins sits in her wheelchair in her La Habra living room. Unlike most IHSS recipients, she doesn't have a home-care provider who's a relative, a fact that often exposes her to the program's shortcomings. Having lived with disabilities since the age of 33, Watkins was independent for years before her health conditions worsened in 2012. She spent the next three years between St. Jude Medical Center and nursing homes.

"I got to the state that I'm in right now, where I need people to do things for me that I can't do on my own," she says. "I didn't want to be in the nursing homes anymore. I felt that if I didn't come home, if I just stayed there, I'd die." The 56-year-old, who suffers from severe rheumatoid arthritis, neuropathies, fibromyalgia and Charcot-Marie-Tooth, wasn't given much of a chance to live—30 percent to be exact.

After learning about IHSS while at a nursing home, Watkins started hiring home-care providers through private job websites. The program seemed like a godsend at first, but it was also a crash course for all involved. It took two or so months for Watkins to be officially entered in IHSS as a recipient. When that happened, the home-care provider she hired went through IHSS orientation and agreed to endure six weeks of work during enrollment before getting retro pay—a common lapse the county is trying to shorten. "IHSS Public Authority is carefully considering ways to speed up the provider-enrollment process to ensure providers are paid in a timely manner," Turtzer writes. "While enrollment of new providers has taken up to six weeks in the past, recent process enhancements have sped up enrollment in as short as three weeks."

Either way, Watkins never stops looking for home-care providers. She's working with Shah and the Dayle McIntosh Center to find consistent coverage. "We spent 50 years trying to get out of institutions and state hospitals," Shah says. "I think people like Watkins and other consumers who have complex medical challenges or disabilities, if they don't get the care they need, there's no other choice than to go into institutionalized settings."

Public Authority told Watkins on more than one occasion that there's a difficulty in placing people in North OC. "People don't understand how that feels, being a disabled person dependent on someone to come," Watkins says. For the first three months of the year, she mostly had no IHSS providers. Being unable to afford private care on her Social Security Disability Insurance, Watkins resorted to racking up $4,000 on her credit cards to get such help. "I don't know how I'm going to pay it," she says. "From January to March, I had nobody, so I was using agencies."

Only 18 percent of IHSS workers in OC aren't related to their clients. When people such as Watkins can't find help, the experience is as frustrating as it is isolating. On occasion, Watkins is left to her own devices without any assistance for things such as meal prep. Because of her limited mobility, it takes an extraordinary amount of effort just to get to a box of crackers or a bag of popcorn on her own and call it dinner.

In a letter to Quirk-Silva after her roundtable, Shah called the shortage of IHSS home-care providers willing to work for minimum wage the program's "greatest obstacle." The need for providers continues to increase, with a recipient pool expected to grow 6 percent to 8 percent by year's end. As of late June, the Public Authority registry caseload count showed 691 providers for 1,733 recipients with identified disabilities, a number Shah says is hindered by the stigma of self-identification. "We need to grow the provider pool," he adds. "I know all too well the trials and tribulations people go through in obtaining quality care."

Taloa abides by a simple adage: love heals. The home-care provider knows it to be true after first taking care of her elderly grandmother and now her older sister. Taloa's grandmother survived six strokes but suffered from a multitude of maladies—severe diabetes, blindness, paralysis and Alzheimer's disease—while living out what were thought to be her last days in a nursing home. "We took her out against medical advice, and they said she'd be dead in three to six weeks," Taloa says. "She lived six years after that."

The experience came during Taloa's first foray into home-care almost a decade ago in 2009. She previously worked as an AT&T customer-service representative, making $33 per hour. Afterward, through IHSS, she started as a home-care provider with an hourly wage of $9.30 for 80 hours of approved work per month. "It was very, very difficult, but at that time, I was married, so it wasn't as difficult, financially, as it is now," she says.

At first, Taloa's grandmother wallowed in depression, but her morale improved once she was at home with family. However, being a home-care provider was taking a toll on Taloa, who recalls one day crying outside her home, feeling hopeless. She didn't want to put her grandmother back into a nursing home, but she felt burned out and isolated. "I was at my worst," Taloa says. At that moment, a UDW organizer visited in hopes of signing her up, which she did. Before that, Taloa described herself as "anti-union 100 percent," just the kind of worker the Freedom Foundation now craves.

"Once they got the maximum 283 hours a month for me, I was able to have two other care providers come," Taloa says. "I was able to give my grandmother around-the-clock care."

A year before her grandmother passed away in 2013, Taloa took Ginn out of her nursing home. She's another medical miracle, having survived two "code blue" hospital emergencies. The last time, Ginn spent eight weeks in a coma. Taloa lists off numerous daily tasks she performs in caring for her sister.

Suddenly, Ginn grasps her hand. "I love my sister, and I know that she wouldn't ever let anything happen to me," Ginn says. "At the nursing home, I'd feel like I was being abused and neglected."

The sisters turn toward each other and share a loving gaze. "I'm hoping that the perception of the people who are leading this county will change about home-care providers," Taloa says. "Without a shadow of a doubt, IHSS is a source for saving lives."

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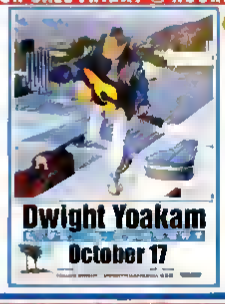

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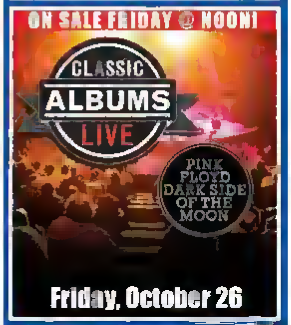

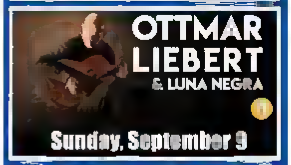

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Thursday
WEEDS CHAIRS?

TOM HINES

fri/09/07

[CONCERT]

BACK TO BLACK

The Winehouse Experience

Echoing the sultry sounds of gone-too-soon chanteuse Amy Winehouse, Mia Karter's stunning vocals against backing band the Hits reinvigorates the singer's beloved spirit through a gorgeous retro jazz/soul sound. The Hits' nine-piece band includes a talented horn section, and along with Karter, they have charmed audiences in and around Southern California and Las Vegas in a tribute show that is equal parts energetic and smooth. Tonight, they'll seduce your ears as they honor the legacy of the distinctive English singer with a memorable set of Winehouse's most iconic hits.

The Winehouse Experience at Harvelle's Long Beach, 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, (562) 239-3700, longbeachharvelles.com. 8 p.m., also Sat. $20-$40. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

[FESTIVALS]

By the Sea

Tall Ships Fest

If you're looking for an informative historical re-enactment and a fun outdoor community festival, the Tall Ships Festival brings in a fleet of maritime activities in celebration of its nautical past. After a kick-off parade of historic boats, enjoy today's craft-beer tasting. Tomorrow and Sunday features a special mermaid breakfast, in which half-human, half-fish creatures swim underwater, lead a crafts booth and hang out; a cannon battle during which guests can climb aboard the *Spirit of Dana Point* and learn about the skills required to maneuver a battleship; and a general festival, with pirate school, mermaid story time, squid dissection and other awesome events. Fill your weekend with seaside good cheer.

Tall Ships Fest at Ocean Institute, 24200 Dana Point Harbor, Dana Point, (949) 496-2274; www.ocean-institute.org. 6 p.m., also Sat.-Sun. Festival, $30; additional events, $30-$70. —AIMEE MURILLO

MORE » ONLINE
OCWEEKLY.COM

sat/09/08

[FESTIVALS]

A GREAT ESCAPE!

Escape to Tiki Island

Pop-culture humorist, historian, author, chef and slide-show freak Charles Phoenix rolls his Winnebago up to the Yost with Escape to Tiki Island, an homage to 1950s-'60s Aloha-land featuring a Retro Dream Vacation Slide Show Tour of Hawaii in the Nuclear Age. Phoenix comments as images flicker along, poking fun and offering fascinating facts and trivia. He often brings along his retro kitchen, where he cooks up some delicious retro goodies straight from the midcentury. Backing Phoenix up are the Tikiyaki Orchestra and the Hula Girls—but, fortunately, no active volcanoes. This kitschy, kooky blast from the past is an all-ages show, so grab the teens, et al., and gee-whiz over all of the full-coverage bikinis, skimpy swim trunks, matriarchal muumuus, and dads wearing black socks with sandals.

Escape to Tiki Island at Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, (888) 862-9573, theyosttheater.com. 8 p.m. $45. —SR DAVIES

[CONVENTIONS]

Unconventional Con

Long Beach Comic Con

Time to geek out, Comic Con-style! While it may not quite have the international reputation of the insanely overwhelming San Diego Comic-Con, it's the next best thing! You know all the stuff you're gonna see: comic-book and memorabilia vendors, comic-book and genre film/TV-show creators and performers, a film festival, and cosplayers! Not enough for you? Okay, how about wrestlers? That's right, in between attending a tribute panel to the late comic artist Steve Ditko and experiencing the "Women of SciFi" panel discussion, you can watch professional wrestlers pummel and throw one another around the ring for family entertainment. Who could ask for more?

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Long Beach Comic Con at Long Beach Convention Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 436-3636; longbeachcomiccon.com. 10 a.m., also Sun. $35-$400; children younger than 10, free. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

sun/09/09

[CONCERT]

Say Yes!

Elliott Smith Tribute Show

To survive a difficult childhood, he listened to the Beatles a lot; he learned guitar and wrote some of the sweetest, smartest songs ever, attracting a devoted listenership. Then he died too young. In his short, productive career, Elliott Smith made six albums and appeared on the *Good Will Hunting* soundtrack. One of those fans might ask you along to the Beatnik Bandito Music Emporium's Smith tribute show, during which performers Tristan Puig, Layla Farahan, the Oohes, Rachel Haden and others raise money for local homeless-services provider Outside In. You can do what you want to. There's no one to stop you. But you should "Say Yes."

Elliott Smith Tribute and Charity Show at Beatnik Bandito Music Emporium, 417 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 835-3313, www.facebook.com/socalrockshows. 7:30 p.m. $10 —ANDREW TONKOVICH

[RECREATION]

Wizards On Ice

Harry Potter Skate Night

Potterheads, break out the cape and the wand. The Rinks at Anaheim ICE is throwing a Harry Potter-themed ice-skating bash. Dress in your house colors (or any Wizarding World-style costume) for discounted admission and skate rental, a costume contest; plus a raffle entry for goodies specific to Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin. There's also a Harry Potter trivia game in which your all-consuming Potter obsession can win your house points. This ice-skating party is also a good chance to see if *Wingardium Leviosa* helps you land that fancy jump.

Harry Potter Skate Night at the Rinks at Anaheim ICE, 300 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, (714) 535-7465, anaheim.therinks.com. 1 p.m. $6 admission with Harry Potter costume. —ERIN DEWITT

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mon/09/10

[FOOD & DRINK]

Into the Wild

Beer and Gear: Preparing for the John Muir Trail

Extending from the Yosemite Valley to the Whitney Portal, the scenic John Muir Trail is one that requires a good amount of planning and research before embarking, even for the most seasoned of hikers and outdoor types. For those looking to take the challenge, join REI's camp experts to learn the basics of how to prep for this trek, from what to pack and what to leave behind to logistics, planning meals and other helpful tips. The presentation is free (registration required), and Bruery Terreux's delicious beers and various food trucks will be on site.

Beer and Gear: Preparing for the John Muir Trail at Bruery Terreux, 1174 N. Grove St., Anaheim, (714) 996-6258, www.rei.com. 6:30 p.m. Free, but registration required, beer sold separately. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/09/11

[CONCERT]

Rapper's Ball

E-40

E-40 has been in the game a couple of decades longer than most popular rappers, but that doesn't mean he's out of touch with the current scene. Rather, it's a testament to his hustle. During his salad days, the artist born Earl Stevens released his music on cassette tapes that he sold himself, having learned how creatively stifling the mainstream music business had been. His nickname came about in his teen years, a nod to his reputation for chugging 40-ounce drinks in one go, but the mature musician, entrepreneur and family man is still a powerhouse when it comes to bringing his best to the main stage.

E-40 with Nef the Pharaoh and OMB Peezy at the House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 Disney Way, Ste. 337, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim. 7 p.m. $30. —AIMEE MURILLO

wed/09/12

GEORGE MASTRO

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Wednesday Women's Ride

Being a bicyclist on the road can be dangerous, so women's premier bike-riding shop the Unlikely Cyclist hosts a weekly Women's Ride so cyclists can feel safe and empowered, as well as to motivate them to keep up their habit. As summer comes to a close, temperatures will drop and the sun will set sooner; all riders are more vulnerable later in the evenings, making these communal cycling sessions all the more necessary. Meet at the shop by 5:45 p.m., then hit the road for a scenic excursion along the Costa Mesa streets. Don't forget to bring some lights and some warmers.

Wednesday Women's Ride meets at the Unlikely Cyclist, 1661 Superior Ave., Costa Mesa, (949) 566-52022, theunlikelycyclist.com. 5:45 p.m. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

[NIGHTLIFE]

Drawn Together

The Big Draw

The monthly Big Draw is probably the Copper Door's longest-running event, bringing in creative locals who love a little art activity mixed in with their bar experience. The concept is simple: a long sheet of white paper is stretched over the venue's elongated wooden table so that patrons can doodle, scribble and paint on it together as they imbibe mixed elixirs and craft beers. Meanwhile, a slew of DJs and producers spin some spacey dance tunes, and local and international artists and merchants provide a pop-up art gallery. Make new friends, check out cool artists, and show off your art skills at this midweek basement party.

The Big Draw at the Copper Door, 225 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 696-1479; thecopperdoorbar.com. 8 p.m. Free. 21+ —AIMEE MURILLO

thu/09/13

[CONCERT]

Through the Roses

Future Islands

When Future Islands look back on their career one day, they'll pinpoint the moment it all came together. They always had the songwriting chops and could dazzle a live crowd, but gaining David Letterman's endorsement in 2014 proved to be a major step. The band performed their then-hit single "Seasons (Waiting on You)" on *The Late Show*, and it soon became the most-viewed video on the show's YouTube page. Since then, Samuel T. Herring and company have dazzled crowds worldwide, becoming a must-see act at festivals, all while putting together a terrific album in *The Far Field*, which was released in April 2017. Don't be surprised if this tour yields a slew of the usual favorites.

Future Islands with Ed Schrader's Music Beat at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, observatoryoc.com. 8 p.m., also Sept. 16. $36. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

AIMEE GOODWIN

[SHOPPING]

SORCEROR'S STORE

Hocus Pocus: Halloween Boutique

If you're not already aware, Corona del Mar-based Roger's Gardens hosts an annual Halloween-shopping extravaganza, where a myriad of spooky goods and decorative items are up for sale for October-obsessed locals. This year, the curated "boo-tique" is Harry Potter-themed, so you'll find some wizard-y decor and accessories, as well as items specific to the Potter series such as Hogwarts spell books, faux mandrake roots and potions classroom props, all neatly arranged in rooms to resemble Dumbledore's study, Moaning Myrtle's bathroom and the Great Hall. You can browse and shop for merchandise online, but you won't get that gleeful Halloween contact high if you don't explore this seasonal staple in the flesh!

Hocus Pocus: Halloween Boutique at Roger's Gardens, 2301 San Joaquin Hills Rd., Corona del Mar, (949) 640-5800, www.rogersgardens.com. 9 a.m. Through Oct. 31. —AIMEE MURILLO

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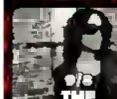
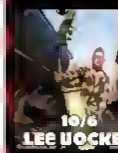

9/8 THE HIGHWAYMAN SHOW

9/20 RICHIE KOTZEN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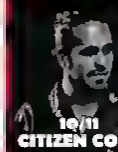
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11/9 & 11/10 AMERICA

9/7	JUSTIN HAYWARD
9/8	THE HIGHWAYMAN SHOW (OUTLAW COUNTRY TRIBUTE)
9/9	GIN BLOSSOMS
9/14	THE ATOMIC PUNKS / WAYWARD SONS
9/15	DESPERADO
9/16	PHIL VASSAR
9/20	RICHIE KOTZEN, VINNIE MOORE, GUS G
9/21	HERMAN'S HERMITS
9/22	HERMAN'S HERMITS
9/23	STRUNZ AND FARAH
9/26	TESLA / SLEDD
9/27	AUGIE MEYERS
9/28	TNE SWEET
9/29	SOULVILLE (ARETHA FRANKLIN TRIBUTE)
9/30	FUNNIEST NOUSEWIVES - AMERICA'S GOT TALENT
10/4	VONOA SNEPARD
10/5	TNE ASSOCIATION
10/6	LEE ROCKER / BIG SANDY AND HIS FLY-RITE BOYS
10/7	TNE GUESS WHO
10/11	AN EVENING WITH CITIZEN COPE
10/12	JO SOUTNER
10/13	TNE BABYS
10/14	PROJECT PRESLEY (ELVIS TRIBUTE)
10/19	BASIA
10/20	OENNIS QUAID AND TNE SNARKS
10/25	TAB BENOIT
10/28	FIVE FOR FIGNTING
10/27	BEE GEES GOLO THE TRIBUTE
10/28	COMEOY NIGNT w/ OOUG STARKR
10/31	OINGO BOINGO DANCE PARTY
11/2	DAVID BRIGNTON'S SPACE OODITY (DAVID BOWIE TRIBUTE)
11/3	AMBROSIA
11/7	WILLIE K
11/9	AMERICA
11/10	AMERICA
11/11	RICKIE LEE JONES
11/14	THE WIND AND THE WAVE
11/15	TNE KINGSTON TRIO
11/16	JONN MAYALL
11/17	AN EVENING WITN RICNIE FURAY
11/16	MICNAEL TOMLINSON
11/20	AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING WITH TOOO RUNOGREN

11/16 JOHN MAYALL

11/30 & 11/31 TOOO RUNOGREN

12/6 & 12/7 JONNY LANG

12/15 ROBERT CRAY

1/17 THE MAGPIE SALUTE

1/24 THE JAMES HUNTER SIX

UPCOMING SHOWS

11/21	AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING WITH TOOO RUNOGREN
11/23	LA GUNS
11/29	BAND OF FRIENDS (A CELEBRATION OF RONY GALLAGHER)
11/30	OSB
12/1	WHICN ONE'S PINK?
12/2	OWEEZIL ZAPPA
12/5	SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS
12/6	JONNY LANG
12/7	JONNY LANG
12/8	LEO ZEPAGAIN
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12/15	ROBERT CRAY
12/27	OONAVON FRANKENREITER
12/29	QUEEN NATION
12/31	BEATLES VS STONES - A MUSICAL SHOWDOWN
1/17	TNE MAGPIE SALUTE
1/18	TOMMY CASTRO
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EDWIN GOEI

Stink Different

Quan Bun Co Giao Thao has a dish that's horrible to smell, but wonderful to eat

BY EDWIN GOEI

If you weren't born or bred in Southeast Asia, then bun dau mam tom is something of an acquired taste. Served at Quan Bun Co Giao Thao in Garden Grove, the dish involves a sauce made from a fermented shrimp paste that can be best described as Vegemite with R.O.

To put it mildly, mam tom stinks like toe jam. And unlike other Vietnamese dishes that involve it, the malodorous substance is not in the background here, rather, it's the star. It's actually the dip into which you're to dunk all that surrounds it: the cool rice noodles, the thin slices of boiled pork, the freshly fried tofu cubes, the cucumbers and the herbs.

But you don't just dive into it as though it's a platter of hummus and carrot sticks; there's some prep to do. You need to squeeze lime into the mam tom, then stir the purplish, slightly chunky paste with chopsticks until it foams and froths like a milkshake. Incorporating air supposedly tames the saltiness and funk, but it's still going to be intense.

The first taste is jarring. It's not a subtle flavor; it's salty, pungent and sharp. Think of the brinniest canned anchovy and multiply it by 10. Then the smell hits you—the unmistakable stench of seafood at some stage of decomposition. And now that you've eaten it, the miasma of rot comes out through your nostrils. But for some reason, you can't stop. The more you consume, the more addictive the dish becomes. You find that its concentrated umami punch elevates the tofu, the boiled pork and the noodles. They're like blank canvases onto which the mam tom now drips and dribbles as though you're Jackson Pollock.

As with Korean hossam, the dish is interactive. You build each bite, layering it and customizing it with herbs, minced garlic and Thai bird chiles. I loved it. Bun dau mam tom is apparently very popular in Hanoi, and I've discovered it's on the menus of dozens of other restaurants in OC. That it's been here all along—known by the Vietnamese, but hiding in plain sight for the rest of us—reveals how after decades of exploring Little Saigon, I still have mysteries to discover.

Thankfully, it stuck out on Quan Bun Co Giao Thao's very brief list of specialties. The restaurant offers only 10 dishes in all. As hinted by the first two words of its name, the Vietnamese vermicelli noodle called bun is the focus here, and every item features its feathery wisps in one form or another, the most popular of which is the bun rieu.

If pho is like beer—pounded down like nothing and poured in as many places as there are varietals of ale—bun rieu is like a carefully crafted martini. And Quan Bun Co Giao Thao's version is one of the best in the county. The pork broth is light but lip-smacking, and in the bowl are floating cubes of tofu, wedges of juice-bursting tomatoes, congealed pork blood, and flotillas of crab cakes made from ground pork and crabmeat. It's the kind of soup into which you squeeze lime, dump the shredded cabbage and herbs that come on the side, then slurp, slurp, slurp. As you do, you'll wonder why pho gets all the attention when bun rieu clearly has more going for it.

The bun cha Hanoi, which Anthony Bourdain and Barack Obama famously ate in Vietnam on *Parts Unknown*, is also wonderful here. It comes on an elaborate serving tray and looks as complicated as the bun dau mam tom. But as Bourdain instructed Obama on that episode, to eat it, you take a wad of the noodles, soak them in the bowl that features charred meat steeped in a sweetened fish sauce, then inhale. In between, you nibble on raw garlic, pickles, pork patties and carbonized bits of belly that have now fully absorbed that golden, fishy punch.

At Quan Bun Co Giao Thao, you will not be in the kind of place where Obama and Bourdain dined, however. Located inside a Ramada Inn, the restaurant resembles a posh nightclub, complete with dangling chandeliers and a stage on which I assume the owner and cook, who is a famous Vietnamese singer, might belt out a song or two. And then there's something about the "Co Giao Thao" part of its name. According to Vietnamese friends, it alludes to either a famous sex scandal or a sexy teacher fetish—yet another Little Saigon mystery that I'll leave for the imagination.

QUAN BUN CO GIAO THAO
10022 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove, (714) 595-9917. Open Wed.-Mon., 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Dishes, $8.99-$11.99. Beer and wine.

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

Brea's Beer Hotspot

ALZA OSTERIA
131 S. Kraemer Blvd., Ste. B5, Brea, (714) 990-1044, alzaosteria.com.

Bruschetta, flatbreads and pasta—three words you don't often see next to Perennial Artisan Ales Abraxas, Hill Farmstead La Vermontoise or Jester King's Gnm Harvest. But that's not the case at Brea's Alza Osteria, where you could spend more time trying to figure out what to drink than what to eat.

"I'll just take the Hacerse El Sueco Farmhouse collab IPA from Naparbier and Beerbliotek while I figure out what to get next," I tell our server.

Alza Osteria's owner, Adrian Pabros swings by for a table visit. He had seen my check-in on Untappd. "When you check into a beer, you get rewarded like no other," he says, wearing a Bottle Logic Brewing hat and a grin.

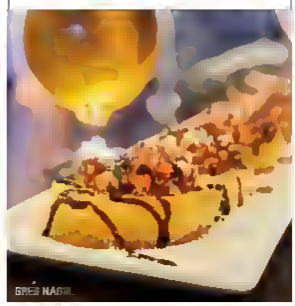
I haven't used the beer app in so long I think I broke it. Who gets 10 badges for one beer?

Among Alza Osteria's dozen draft lines, four are from a recent tap takeover by Naparbier, a brewery out of Pamplona, Spain, a city best known for Ernest Hemmingway's many heavy-footed romps. Naparbier's brewer, Beinat Gutierrez, and founder/owner, Juan Rodriguez, even made it out for the event.

Local breweries are also featured at Alza Osteria, including Green Cheek, Bottle Logic and Chapman Crafted, but the real gem is the bottle list, which has around 75 offerings. "I try to keep a pretty good spread of beers on there," Pabros says. "I try to keep a lot of the Belgian Trappist stuff, as well as a good mix of fun stuff."

I guess I'll have to break Untappd some more.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM


GREG NAGEL

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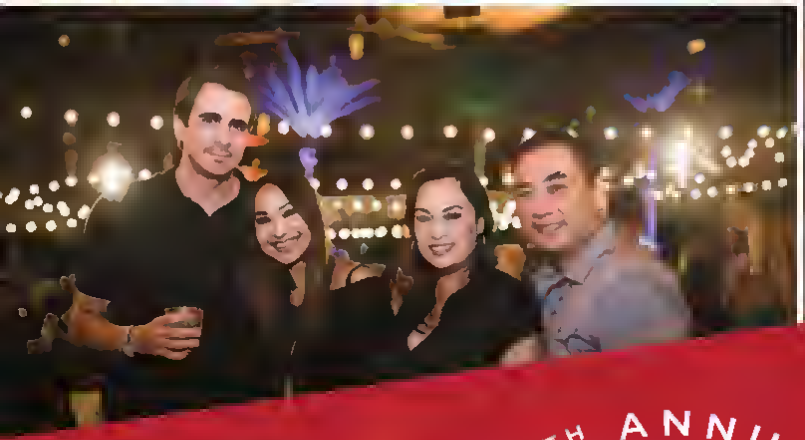

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Firing Up the Grills

Art Gonzalez went straight to the source for Panxa Cocina's Hatch Chile Roast-Out

MENDOZA WITH GONZALEZ
SARAH BENNETT

LONG BEACH LUNCH
» SARAH BENNETT

Over the summer, Long Beach chef Art Gonzalez drove to New Mexico to meet with the state's foremost academic expert in Hatch chiles, the seasonal sweet-then-hot peppers that have come to define the region's complex history and cuisine.

Every September, as New Mexico's hot days and cool nights begin to turn into harsh winter, a harvest takes over the Rio Grande-fed Hatch Valley, bringing pop-up roadside roasting operations, to which people drive from hundreds of miles to stock up on pounds of fire-licked green peppers.

"Hatch chile is a fix," says Gonzalez, a SoCal native who spent a large chunk of his career cooking at fine-dining restaurants in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. "We crave it. That's what they say chile does to you."

In preparing for his own traditional Hatch chile roast on Sept. 15 and 16—the first in Long Beach since the opening of his modern New Mexican restaurant Panxa Cocina in Belmont Heights three years ago—Gonzalez visited New Mexico State University's Chile Pepper Institute in Las Cruces. There, he discussed the history and nuance of the state's 150-plus native chile varietals with co-founder, director and world-renowned chile-pepper breeder Paul Bosland. The goal? To find a local farmer who could supply him with a few thousand pounds of fresh chiles for the roasting and to collaborate with the institute on a special tasting menu for Panxa's first official Hatch Chile Month.

"I wanted to go straight to the source," Gonzalez says. "It was important for me to meet the grower and make a relationship with them."

Though Panxa has been importing Hatch chiles to use in everything from a spicy salad dressing to its signature New Mexican-style stacked enchiladas, they've come through a reputable distributer, not direct from the source.

But while drinking his nightcap at a hotel bar in Las Cruces, he met a local who connected him to a family-owned farm in the Hatch Valley. It's the only place in the world where the mineral-rich water from the Rio Grande infuses the volcanic soil just so, creating the precise conditions needed to grow the in-demand varietal. A few days later, he was sitting under a tree at a small Hatch chile farm, sipping on a Coors Light and chatting with Hector Mendoza, a second-generation farmer whose dad first came to the U.S. to till the land in the 1930s. Mendoza doesn't sell to large accounts, preferring to pick his chiles when they're at peak ripeness, then let local restaurants buy their share.

In California, local grocery stores have been hosting Hatch chile roasts since August, but Mendoza knows that the true Hatch season doesn't start until September. "It's like growing grapes," Gonzalez says. "There's terroir involved. There's the dirt and the water, and it all creates an exact perfect time to pick it. You don't know about any of this until you go down and talk to the people who grow it."

Gonzalez recently returned from Mendoza's farm with 2,500 pounds of Hatch chiles. On Panxa's menu for the entire month of September are new Hatch-inspired dishes, from an heirloom blue corn quesadilla with roasted Hatch jam to a Wagyu country-fried steak with Hatch chile gravy. A prawn-stuffed Hatch chile relleno takes a nod from the Mexican-style chile en nogada, and a dessert sopapilla uses the infusion of spicy into sweet (plus piñon!) to form a playful end to any meal.

"The dishes might seem heavy, but that's the way food is there," says Gonzalez of the southwestern state. "The winters are good, so the food is comforting. I wanted to use this opportunity to push the chile to do things that aren't being done, even in New Mexico."

HATCH CHILE ROAST-OUT
at Panxa Cocina, 3937 E. Broadway, Long Beach, (562) 433-7999; panxacocina.com
Sept. 15-16, noon-5 p.m.

PHOTOS BY GREG NAGEL

Get Sauced

TRADE Food Hall's notable bites and booze

For whatever reason, I often get called "boss" when dining. There are certain places where I expect to hear it, such as a recent family gathering at a Chili's in the Inland Empire, but not in Irvine. So hearing, "Hey, boss" as I walked into TRADE Food Hall's Center Hub made me take note.

"Hey, shm," I answered with a nod, "what's good up in this food hall?"

"Let's see," barman Cameron Lang said, rubbing his beard. "Red Envelope has a rad phorrito. Dos Chinos' Hollywood chicken burrito is also bomb. There's the Gyro King spot. ... Hmmm ... Two Birds has some great chicken sandwiches, then there's Butterleaf—but I don't really eat vegan stuff."

Just then, I had a flashback. Maybe it was seeing Dos Chinos and hearing about vegan food that sent me back to that epic food truck meetup at the Irvine Teller lot eight years ago ... back when Jason Quinn was inside a bright-green Lime Truck and Stephanie Morgan's huge smile was serving up Seabirds' avocado tacos and bomb-ass sweet potato fries. I miss those damn tacos.

After deciding on the vegan spot, I asked Lang, "How legit is your Bloody Mary?"

"Super," he said.

While he built my drink, I wandered next door to Butterleaf, where I ordered the house burger ($9) and avocado bombs ($6), hoping they'd pair nicely with the booze.

Butterleaf is a plant-based joint by chef/sauce nerd Andrew Gruel of Slapfish and TRADE's Two Birds. Had I known that before, I might have chosen a different food spot, knowing full well I may have to serve as lifeguard for my order. Drowning in thick liquids of various colors, food at Gruel's other places can sometimes resemble a Basquiat painting. Luckily, my avocado bombs arrived with the perfect amount drizzled on top. Conveniently placed to the side was a 55 gallon drum of the stuff, in case I felt inclined to bathe in it. Kidding, of course!

EAT & DRINK THIS NOW

» GREG NAGEL

As it turns out, Butterleaf's avocado bombs pair very well with Center Hub's Bloody Mary ($9), which has just the right amount of kick from San Francisco's Lefty O'Douls mix. It's rummed with Tajin and features an ample amount of vodka and garnish. "We have a big, 34-ounce version as well," Lang says as he points at the large-handled mugs at the bar.

The bombs' crunchy breading and creamy insides again brought me back to Seabirds' level of avocado taco perfection. The food halls of today are basically the food-truck meetups of yesteryear—except now you can legally add booze.

"Anything else, boss?"

TRADE FOOD HALL
2222 Michelson Dr., Irvine,
www.tradefoodhall.com

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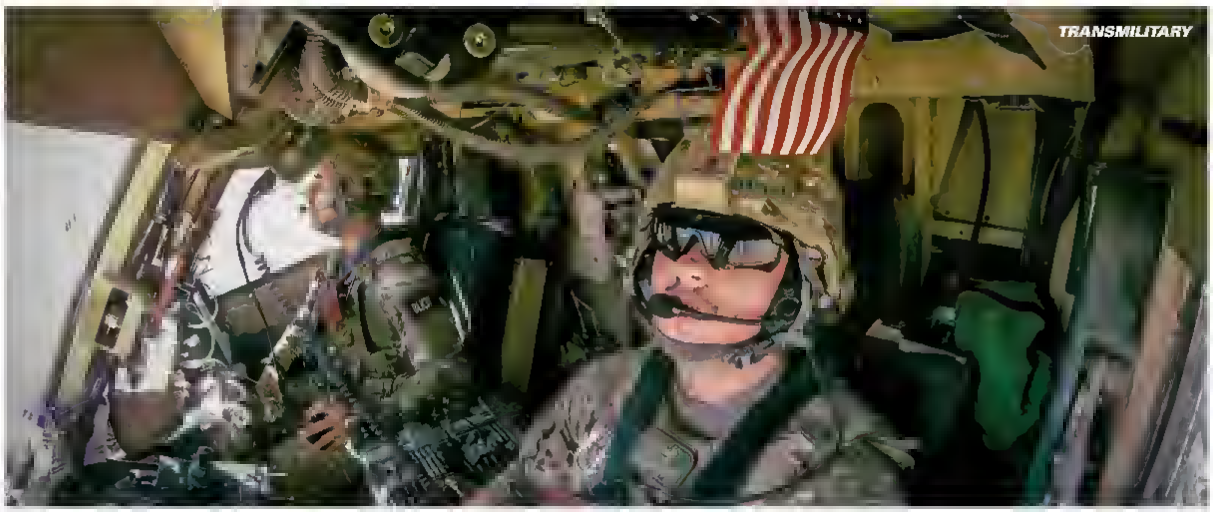

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Hi-Yo, Silver Anniversary

At the 25-year mark, QFilm Fest is as relevant as ever

BY MATT COKER

As my colleague Aimee Murillo mentioned in her Horrible Imaginings Film Festival preview last week, September is when the fall film festival season kicks off, so it is fitting that the 25th anniversary of Long Beach's longest-running film fest happens in the beginning of the month.

Robert Cano, the pride of Cal State Long Beach's College of Business Administration, founded the Long Beach QFilm Festival in 1993. He was a cinema fan who hosted movie nights for friends in his small apartment. Since the AIDS epidemic was raging at the time, Cano, who was also a volunteer with the LGBTQ Center in Long Beach, decided to mix his love of movies with his compassion for those in his community who were dying.

"I wanted to start something more positive," Cano told the *Long Beach Press-Telegram*'s Richard Guzman recently. "I wanted to create a cultural event for the LGBTQ community and also a way to see us in a more positive light."

His QFilm Festival—or Qfilms, as the hepcats now call it—has gone on to raise funds for and awareness of the LGBTQ Center ever since. That's a good thing because just when you think modern medicine has successfully managed HIV/AIDS and marriage equality has swept the land, along come renewed threats, such as HIV infections being forecast to rise among black American men and the Trump administration.

So, yes, we need Qfilms, the 2018 run of which begins Thursday, Sept. 6 with an opening-night party at the LGBTQ Center that starts before and continues after the opener, *A Long Road to Freedom*. The Advocate *Celebrates 50 Years*, screens next door at the historic Art Deco movie palace the Art Theatre—or the Art, as the hepcats now call it.

Partying; movie-watching; and mingling with filmmakers, actors, critics and other industry professionals continue at the Center and the Art through Sunday. The narrative features, documentaries and short films presented aim to embody the rich diversity and experiences of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities. Many pictures make their Long Beach, California, or West Coast premieres, and several include audience Q&As with actors and filmmakers after the end credits roll.

Narrated by Laverne Cox of *Orange Is the New Black*, featuring music by Melissa Etheridge and making its Long Beach premiere, the acclaimed documentary *A Long Road to Freedom* chronicles how the *PRIDE* (Personal Rights in Defense and Education) gay-rights newsletter of 1967 later morphed into the *Los Angeles Advocate* news magazine and, finally, *The Advocate*. It's not only the largest LGBTQ publication in the country, but also the only surviving one of its kind that started before the 1969 Stonewall riots.

Biographical feature films making their local premieres Friday night are *Wild Nights With Emily*, an irreverent exploration of the famous poet Emily Dickinson, who is played by the genius comedic actress Molly Shannon, and *Mapplethorpe*, an eye-opening look at the life of controversial gay photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, who is portrayed by the supremely talented Matt Smith of *Dr. Who* and *The Crown* fame.

Saturday brings the West Coast premiere of the French comedy *Embrasse-Moi!* (*Kiss Me!*), in which a lesbian serial romantic crushes on her new obsession, the Southern California premiere of *Just Friends*, an off-kilter love story between two young men from very different backgrounds, and the Long Beach premieres of two documentaries with compelling subjects. The award-winning *Man Made* follows transgender bodybuilders, and *Every Act of Life* examines out Tony Award-winning playwright Terrence McNally. The Queer and Trans Shorts program also screens Saturday, as does the docu-series *Finding Home*, which looks at LGBT immigrants and asylum seekers in Los Angeles.

It's another strong lineup Sunday, with the Southern California premieres of two South American films. *Mi Mejor Amigo* (*My Best Friend*) is an award-winning coming-of-age tale from Argentina, and *Las Herederas* (*The Heiresses*) is the intense story of two Paraguayan women from wealthy families risking it all to be together. A couple of documentaries make their Long Beach premieres, the award-winning *TransMilitary*, which profiles trans service members who challenged the Pentagon, and *Shakedown*, which provides a lesson on LA's African-American lesbian club scene. Sunday's shorts programs are Men In Briefs and Women In Shorts, although none of the 14 films are about fashion.

Jury and audience awards will be given to worthy films in several categories at the closing-night party at the Center. Indeed, there is at least one party every day that those holding festival passes or tickets can attend at no additional charge, as well as an ice cream social on Saturday afternoon and a Sunday brunch. A filmmakers lounge overflows with schmooze all day Saturday and Sunday.

All net proceeds from Qfilms benefit the Center, and guess what? Starting in October, submissions will already start being accepted for the next festival (via wwwwithoutabox.com), which, along with the way things are going, leads to this bold prediction: 2019 Qfilms will be needed more than ever.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

LONG BEACH QFILM FESTIVAL films screen at Art Theatre, 2025E. Fourth St., Long Beach, arttheatrelongbeach.com. Thurs.-Sun., Sept. 6-9. Check website for a full schedule and show times. $12 per screening; $45 per five-film pass; $120 for an all-access pass. Opening-night party at the LGBTQ Center of Long Beach, 2017 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, qfilmslongbeach.com. Thurs., Sept. 6, 6 p.m. Free to all pass and ticket holders.

Ain't Nothin' But a Hound Dog

BY MATT COKER

DISNEY

2001: A Space Odyssey. Stanley Kubrick's 1968 masterpiece about a spaceship's onboard computer system squaring off in a death match with its human master. *The Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Sept. 6: 2, 5 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

Anime Club. Such titles as *Bleach, Naruto, My Hero Academia, Attack on Titan* and *Sword Art Online* are streamed during the program aimed at ages 13-17. *Cypress Library, 5331 Orange Ave., Cypress, (714) 826-0350. Thurs., Sept. 6, 5 p.m. Free.*

2018 Long Beach QFilm Festival. See my story on page 24. *Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 436-5435, qfilmslongbeach.com. Thurs.-Sun., Sept. 6-9. See website for show times. $12 per screening, five-film pass, $45, all-access pass, $102.*

***La mafia uccide solo d'estate* (*The Mafia Kills Only in Summer*).** Pierfrancesco "Pif" Diliberto's 2013 film-directing debut aims to expose what his generation went through as a bloody war raged for Mafia supremacy. *Regency San Juan Capistrano, 26762 Verdugo St., San Juan Capistrano, (949) 661-3456. Thurs., Sept. 6. Call for show time and ticket prices.*

Perfect Blue. Satoshi Kon's R-rated 1997 psychological horror anime is about a singer who quits her band to become an actress and shed her good-girl image. However, her fans aren't ready to see her go. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Sept. 6, 7 p.m. (subtitles); Mon., 7 p.m. (dubbed). $12.50.*

Look to the Sky. Director Brett Culp's documentary weaves together the uplifting stories of young people who have demonstrated the spirit of Superman, in hopes that viewers will find their inner superheroes. *The Frida Cinema, tugg.com/events/look-to-the-sky.php3. Thurs., Sept. 6, 7:30 p.m. $11.*

Moana. A young princess and navigator search the South Pacific for a fabled island of mysterious secrets. *Salt Creek Beach, 33333 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Dana Point, (949) 923-2280, ocparks.com. Fri., 6 p.m. Free.*

Coco. A 12-year-old is sent to the Land of the Dead, where he will remain unless he returns to the Land of the Living before Day of the Dead ends. *Eisenhower Park, Main Street and Ocean Avenue (next to the pier), Seal Beach, moviesintheparksb.com. Fri., 7 p.m. Free.*

Your Name. The 2016 fantasy/drama has two strangers being connected in a bizarre way and, after a bond forms, discovering distance may be all that keeps them apart. *The Source OC, first-floor Step Plaza, 6940 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 521-8858, www.thesourceoc.com. Fri., 7 p.m. Free.*

Lilo & Stitch. A Hawaiian girl adopts an unusual pet that turns out to be a notorious extra-terrestrial fugitive. *Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort & Marina, behind Moe B's Watersports, 1131 Back Bay Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 729-3863. Fri., 7:30 p.m. Free, but there is a fee to park.*

Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich. An evil as old as time animates puppets up for auction at a convention, where they embark on a bloody killing spree. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri.-Sun., 10 & 11:45 p.m., Mon.-Thurs., Sept. 13, 3 & 10 p.m. $7-$10.*

The Breakfast Club. The 1985 John Hughes film is filled with parts that will make you wince. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 11:30 a.m., 2 & 5 p.m.; Sun., 11:30 a.m., 2, 5 & 7 p.m. $7-$10.*

Frozen. Let it snow, let it snow—oh oh—RIDDLESTICKS! Now I'm going to have that damn song stuck in my head the rest of the day. *Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort & Marina, (949) 729-3863. Sat., 7:30 p.m. Free, but there is a fee to park.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. See live shadow-cast troupe Midnight Insanity shimmy to "The Time Warp." *Art Theatre, (562) 436-5435. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Kwaku Ananse. In Akosua Adoma Owusu's 2013 dramatic short, the traditional West African fable of Kwaku Ananse is combined with the story of a young outsider attending her estranged father's funeral. *Bowers Museum, Kershaw Auditorium, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 567-3677, bowers.org. Sun., 1:30 p.m. $9-$12.*

The Sound of Music. Robert Wise's 1965 musical was adapted from the Rodgers and Hammerstein stage hit about the von Trapp Family Singers, who were one of the world's best-known concert groups just before World War II. Presented by Fathom Events and Turner Classic Movies, the feature is preceded and followed by special commentary from TCM host Ben Mankiewicz. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sun. & Wed., 2 & 7 p.m. $10.50-$12.50.*

Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood. Matt Tyrnauer's documentary is based on the best-selling memoir of Scotty Bowers. *Art Theatre, (562) 436-5435. Mon., 6:15 & 8:30 p.m., Tues.-Wed., 8:30 p.m.-Thurs., Sept. 13, 5 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Get My Gun. Amanda finds herself on the verge of motherhood and the target of a psychotic stalker who will stop at nothing to get her hands on the unborn child. *Art Theatre, (562) 436-5435. Tues., 8:30 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Cypress St. Mural, "El Proletario-edo de Aztlan." Documentary short about the restoration of the mural that fine artist Emigdio Vasquez painted in 1978 and his son, Emigdio "Higgy" Vasquez, restored in 2014. *Chapman University, Waltmar Theatre, East Palm Avenue and North Center Street, Orange, (714) 997-6815. Wed., 5:30 p.m. Free.*

Field of Dreams. An Iowa corn farmer hears voices that encourage him to build a baseball diamond in his fields. *Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $9.*

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Western Wednesdays presents Sergio Leone's classic spaghetti western. *Regency San Juan Capistrano, (949) 661-3456. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $14.*

Crown and Anchor. The lives of a straight-edge young man and his user cousin intersect with violent and tragic consequences. *Art Theatre, (562) 436-5435. Wed., 9 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Dead Poets Society. English teacher John Keating (Robin Williams) inspires his students to look at poetry with authentic knowledge and feelings. *Fullerton Public Library, Osborne Auditorium, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., Sept. 13, 1 p.m. Free.*

Moses. Live animals, massive sets and spectacular special effects are promised. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Sept. 13, 6:30 p.m., also Sept. 15, 12:55 p.m. $12.50.*

Alleged Gangster. Andy Pressman wrote, produced, directed and stars as a mobster who comes out of prison after three years to claw his way to the top of LA's underworld. *Art Theatre, (562) 436-5435. Thurs., Sept. 13, 7:30 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Mandy. A broken and haunted man hunts in the Pacific Northwest wilderness for an unhinged religious sect that slaughtered the love of his life. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Sept. 13, 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

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What Would Neil Think?

Rating OC's fall productions before they happen

BY JOEL BEERS

Neil Simon died last month. Based on what we saw on social media, lots of people took it hard. Palpable was the anguish, sincere were the remembrances of this most commercially successful of playwrights (who died at the ripe age of 91), barbed were the attacks on the snooty-nosed contingent who don't consider the appellation of "perfect troubadour for the middle classes of the '60s and '70s," in the words of the *Washington Post*'s Peter Marks, to be that superlative, considering so many of his characters were the kind of white, comfortable, wise-cracking New Yorkers who, in real life, would be unbearable to be around.

And who are we to argue? So, for our occasionally annual preview of the most interesting plays on tap this fall on OC stages, OC *Weekly* proudly presents its (patent pending) WWNT barometer. What Would Neil Think? We took the upcoming plays that most piqued our interest, and then, using an impossibly advanced algorithm that would make Google blush with envy, rated each play on a 1-to-10 scale on how much the voice of white middle-brow America in the sort-of late 20th century would approve.

COURTESY OF CHANCE THEATER

The Other Place. Super-smart neurologist starts seeing weird shit on the eve of delivering the most important seminar of her career. The Chance doesn't pick dumb non-musicals, and (OC product!) Sharr White's 2012 play most likely will continue that string. **WWNT?** If you type "neurologist" and "Neil Simon" into Google (How the fuck did you think this snazzy algorithm works anyway?), the first link is to a Dr. Neil Simon at St. Vincent's Clinic in Sydney, Australia. **10!** *Chance Theater, 5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, (888) 455-4212, chancetheater.com. Sept. 21-Oct. 21.*

The Producers. Who doesn't love this Mel Brooks musical masterpiece that seems, strangely enough, to only get better as it ages? Maybe we've all finally gotten over that Hitler thing? **WWNT?** Unlike most of us, Brooks knew Simon well, and via Twitter, he called him a "clutch hitter" as a writer on the seminal comedy TV series *Your Show of Shows* as well as "one of the sweetest and least jealous writers you could ever work with." **10!** *One More Productions at the Gem Theater, 12852 Main St., Garden Grove, (714) 741-9550, www.onemoreproductions.com. Sept. 27-Oct. 21.*

The Secret in the Wings. STAGEStheatre's production of *Peter and the Starcatcher* last year was about a kajillion times better than the piece of crud wheeled out by South Coast Repertory a couple of years before. Patti Cumby, who helmed that production, returns as director with this one which, frankly, we know nothing about other than that it kind of weaves *Beauty and the Beast* and a few Brothers Grimm tales into a "captivating voyage into our collective childhood subconscious," according to the theater's propaganda. **WWNT?** Neil was a kid once. **7.** *STAGEStheatre, 400 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 525-4484, www.stagesoc.org. Oct. 5-Nov. 4.*

Kings. Sarah Burgess' play about an idealistic, newly elected congresswoman thrust into the swamp of Washington, D.C., was a big hit last year off-Broadway, which is in New York. **WWNT?** Did someone say New York? **9.** *South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555, www.scr.org. Oct. 13-Nov. 10.*

Vampire Queen of Mars. Michael Dale Brown, who has worked so hard for so long helping shepherd this theater, wrote and is directing this "campy" send-up of Hollywood B-movies from the 1950s, in which an expedition to Mars discovers a race of Amazon vampires led by a younger blood-sucking Neil Simon (okay, that last bit isn't true). **WWNT?** He got mentioned about 10 words ago, so.... **10!** *Costa Mesa Playhouse, 661 Hamilton St., Costa Mesa, (949) 650-5269, costamesaplayhouse.com. Oct. 19-Nov. 11.*

Corpus Christi. Hard to believe that when this Terrence McNally passion play about a gay redeemer of mankind and his gay acolytes was first produced in OC in 1999, the Rude Guerrilla Theater Co. had to be concerned about the possibility of the protests, bomb threats and fatwahs that the initial NYC production dealt with the year before. Hard to believe that anyone used to care about theater in any way other than expressing their heartbreak about a 91-year-old playwright dying, that is. **WWNT?** Other than Felix, Neil didn't really traffic much in overtly queer characters, did he? **2.** *The Wayward Artist at Grand Central Arts Center, 125 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, www.thewaywardartist.org. Nov. 9-Nov. 18.*

Culture Clash (Still) In America. Yeah, this ain't the fall, but damn it, it's the return to OC of the smart, satirical and hyper-kinetic blend of political sharpness and gut-busting funny that makes Richard Montoya, Ric Salmas and Herbert Siguenza such a pleasure to watch, regardless of what they're doing together. **WWNT?** Hmm... Montoya... Salmas... Siguenza... **1.** *South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555, www.scr.org. Dec. 30-Jan. 28, 2019.*

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ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

Sept. 7-13

ALCHEMY THEATRE PRESENTS "CYRANO": Cyrano helps his friend Christian win the heart of Roxane by penning poems for her in Christian's name. Fri., Sept. 7 & 21, 8 p.m., Sat., 2, 5 & 8 p.m., Sun., 5 p.m. Through Sept. 22. $20. STAGEStheatre, 400 E. Commonwealth Ave., Ste. 4, Fullerton, (714) 525-4484, alchemy-theatre-company.ticketleap.com/cyrano.

"ATTHEBEACH": Inet Peshkess creates scenic works composed of mixed media, painting and photography. Open Mon.-Thurs., 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun., noon-5 p.m. Through Nov. 2. Free. Newport Beach Central Library, 1000 Avocado Ave., Newport Beach, (949) 717-3800; www.newportbeachlibrary.org.

BALLET REPERTORY THEATRE'S FALL FESTIVAL: Ballet, jazz and classical performances by BRT as well as Ballet West and OC Dance Center. Sat., 7 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m. $18-$20. Golden West College Theater, 15751 Gothard St., Huntington Beach, (714) 895-8150; www.gwctheater.com.

"CELEBRATE—A SOLO EXHIBITION BY LORENZO BAKER": The artist examines the dissemination of images of African-American trailblazers and asks, "What if every month were Black History Month?" Open by appointment only. Through Oct. 14. Free. Gallery 667, 404 W. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (424) 228-0402, gallery667.com.

COMEDY AT THE CARRILLO: Rachel McDowell hosts this standup event featuring Kallen Frsklna and Kavin Munroe. Sat., 8 p.m. $20-$25. Cabrillo Playhouse, 202 Avenida Cabrillo, San Clemente, (949) 492-0465, www.cabrilloplayhouse.org.

"COSMIC DREAM": Sunny Kim allows acrylic paint to flow unfettered and freely off linen to represent the beauty and unpredictable chaos of the universe. Open Mon.-Sun., noon-5 p.m. Through Oct. 1. Free. Sandstone Gallery, 384 A N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-6775, sandstonegallery.com.

FLYING MIZ DAISY VINTAGE MARKET: The curated market features more than 75 vendors and exhibitors selling vintage, repurposed and handmade objects. Fri.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. OC Fair-88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-1500; www.flyingmizdaisy.com.

"INNER REALMS": Artist Emily Babette creates mixed-media drawings of her friends and acquaintances. Fri., 8-10 p.m. Free. Hihblaton Gallery, 223 W. Santa Fe, Fullerton, (951) 318-2078; hihblaton.com.

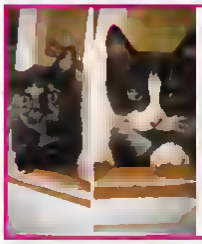
"IT'S TIME THE TALE WERE TOLD": Santa Ana's Omo Peraz presents paintings that reflect how music, his Latino heritage and pop culture inform his art. Open Thurs.-Sat., noon-5 p.m. Through Sept. 22. Free. Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, 117 Sycamore St., Santa Ana, (714) 617-1517; www.occca.org.

Upcoming Events

The Color Run 5k Huntington Beach
Saturday, September 29
at 9 AM - 12 PM
It's a bird! It's a plane! No... it's The Color Run flying your way in 2018!

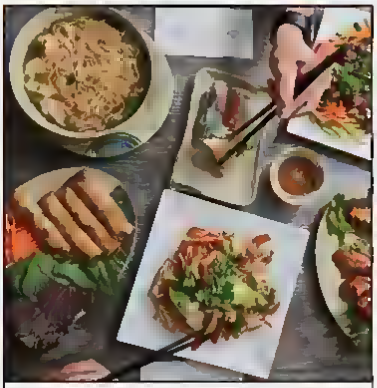
Cruisin' For A Cure
Saturday, September 22 at 6 AM– 4 PM
Cruisin' for a Cure is the world's largest one-day charity car show with over 3,500 vehicles on display and over 200 vendors and exhibitors. Be assured that your participation in the event and any donations go directly to prostate cancer research.
General admission is $15 (Save $2 with your AAA card), children 12 & younger are free.

Messages



Need your help to find Rowie & Bella a forever home!!!! They are 10 weeks old siblings that have been fostered along with their mom since they were a week old. They are a loving, playful and healthy pair. They have been vaccinated, wormed, fixed and microchipped. Now all they need is a loving family of their own. Please contact Lorraine at Long Beach Spay and Neuter Foundation if interested in meeting these lovely kittens. (562)544-0335 or lbsn2006@yahoo.com

Featured This Week



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HOUSE CATS MIKE AND CASEY CONDIA

PHOTO BY CJ SIMONSON

Home Grown Vinyl

Rad Cat Records keeps its wacky rock & roll world in-house

BY CJ SIMONSON

You wouldn't know from the neighborhood or the vibe of its surrounding city, but the sound of modern American psych rock is being packaged and sold out of a quaint home just outside downtown Orange.

The fact that a rock label is being run out of one of Orange County's sleepier cities is an appropriately trippy contradiction, yet Mike and Casey Condia's house is hardly reflective of the colorful, often surreal music they've released under Rad Cat Records. Founded in October 2014, this small-time operation has thrived.

While Casey was battling cancer and Mike was fighting off a serious viral infection, the two set to work on their grassroots label, reading how-to guides by night and working with up-and-coming bands by day. After several chance runins with the guys from Mr. Elevator & the Brain Hotel, then-Cal State Fullerton student Mike approached them about pressing a single, the band stuck with the Condias, releasing the LP *When the Morning Greets You* last year.

Early on, the label was compared aesthetically and sonically to other local institutions, including Burger Records. Those comparisons aren't unwarranted—if it weren't for Burger passing on Mr. Elevator's material, Rad Cat Records likely wouldn't exist as it does today. "When I was starting to tiptoe into the music stuff, I would just offer to bring the [Mr. Elevator] guys a pizza for advice," Mike says. "We've worked hard on carving out our own thing separate from them, but we owe them a lot."

Currently on the label's growing roster are '70s glam rockers Hammered Satin, Gantez and their brand of lush space travel, poppy throwback-indie outfit Spendtime Palace, who are becoming bigger by the day; and the psychedelic surf rats of Chinese Wax Job.

Days at the label begin around 10 a.m., with a trip to the post office to ship off records typically around the mid-afternoon. A host of emails and calls are made and returned before the Condias attempt to call it quits around 5:30 p.m. "People will email or call and ask to get in touch with Mike because they think there are more people involved in this," Casey says. In Rad Cat's earlier days, Mike says, they would make up different names so the outfit seemed bigger. By and large, it is still mostly the two of them doing the work.

Among their many tasks, they also sometimes film videos. In April, they created a kitschy, brightly colored promo featuring a father and his teenage daughter listening to old-timey banjo music; the daughter gets frustrated with dad's musical choice and looks up Rad Cat's website on her computer, ordering some righteous platters. The sound of Hammered Satin's raucous garage rock kicks in as a guy resembling *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*'s Jeff Spicoli, but with cat ears (like "Mr. Rad Cat" from the logo drawn by Ben Montero), bakes one up like a pizza, hops on his skateboard and tears down the sidewalks of Orange to deliver the goods. Then comes the catchy chorus: "Rad Cat Records! CDs and taaaaapes!"

In addition to focusing on the label, Mike and Casey are eyeing a potential animated TV show and a Sun Records-style storefront. "No day looks the same," Casey says. "Sometimes, we're driving up to LA for a meeting, or sometimes we're going to the studio because Hammered Satin is recording."

Running a business out of their house comes with a complicated caveat. It's a home first and a place of business second ("at least whenever possible"). From the living room, you can see two desks with computers in an office space filled with records and cassettes, but the rest of the house doesn't feel overtaken by the ups and downs of their label.

"We did it wrong at first," Casey admits. "There wasn't a good work-life balance, and I think we learned that the hard way. Now we try to schedule time with each other ... as much as we can."

But when their special pants come out, it's go-time. "For real, though," Mike clarifies, laughing. "We do have checkered pants." Ah, the joys of working from home!

That refreshing zaniness is maybe what makes Rad Cat Records a success.

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For more info on Rad Cat Records, visit www.radcatrecords.com.

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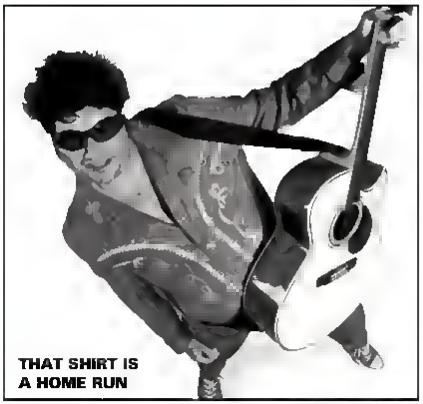
Team Player

Chris Cruz's political song about baseball hits home in his local bar

BY NATE JACKSON

We're never really prepared to hear a song that makes our lives feel a lot easier, or at least a little less complex. Sometimes, it's a tune on the radio or an acoustic jam being strummed at the back of your local bar that sounds like a goofy little ditty about baseball. If you truly believe the slogan "Baseball Is Life," then you should put your drink down and listen a little closer to folksinger Chris Cruz.



THAT SHIRT IS A HOME RUN

COURTESY OF CHRIS CRUZ

The Anaheim troubadour has played and recorded records in OC since the mid-aughts. However, he realized his knack for lefty, Dylan-esque activism fell on deaf ears in our historically conservative county. "That, and I realized I needed to play cover music to get paid," he admits.

But one thing that brings everyone to the table is sports—so he figured why not couch one of his protest songs in a baseball metaphor. Hence, his first original tune in years was born. "I Like the Red, I Like the Blue."

As a Cerritos native, Cruz grew up rooting for the Dodgers up until moving to Anaheim, where he started sporting Angels jerseys. Some may denounce being able to like things about two different teams as sacrilege, but it is part of life, just like politics. As America's greatest pastime has shifted to launching flame wars on Facebook, it's nice to hear a song that can bring people together.

"Times are just a fashion, but the clothes don't seem to hide the demographic engineers to profit and divide," he sings. "But I like the red, I like the blue. I like the Dodgers and the Angels, too, and the fear that runs through my veins when I say, 'Let's go, United States.' I like the red, I like the blue!"

See what he did there?

"This is my way of saying something without really saying it and kinda injecting a little humor," Cruz says.

It helps that Cruz is wise enough to see how technology and new breakthroughs can change society in the short term. He was just a budding musician when MTV debuted, he was working a party at a Marriott when it first broadcast. "I thought it was the greatest thing ever," he says. "I don't think people remember that when cable first started, they said, 'We're gonna make you pay for it, but we're not gonna make you sit through any commercials—that was their pitch." Ah, yes, those were the days!

"But now," he adds, "there's commercials all the time. When you get home late, sometimes it's nothing but infomercials."

Though he writes solo, "I Like the Red, I Like the Blue" was a group effort recorded with Bobbo Barnes of OC folk duo the Fallen Stars and that band's drummer, Matt Froehlich, on the skins. On banjo is 22-year-old Quinton "Banjo" Fults, who Cruz discovered at a Michael Ubaldini showcase where Fults was tearing it up on songs by Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie. (Fults also plays kazoo on the track.)

Though Cruz's first original song in a while has been a hit at the local bars and venues he plays—including Beach Hut Deli, where he hosts an open mic—he plans to continue playing covers. After all, a musician has to eat. But it helps having a profound curveball in your back pocket that might knock some sense into people.

"I'm glad it's a song everyone seems to relate to, no matter what your politics are," Cruz says. "I'm grateful for the whole progression of this record and how it came out."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

CHRIS CRUZ

performs with Oddstock at the Beach Hut Deli, 19025 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach, (714) 841-7609. Sat., 6:30 p.m. Free. All ages.

COURTESY OF JESIKA VON RABBIT

Friday

BURIED ALIVE, E TOWN CONCRETE, CRIMINAL INSTINCT, DARE: 7 p.m., $18, all ages. Cham Reaction, 1652 Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, (714) 535-6067, www.alleges.com

ISLAND BLOCK RADIO PRESENTS TOFIGA, FEATURING FIJI—I CAN'T BELIVE: 7 p.m. $40, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

MDM JEANS, JUST FRIENDS, SHORTLY, GRADUATING LIFE: 7 p.m. $15, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

SAM GELLAITRY: 9 p.m., $17, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com.

SUFFERER, KAONASHI, MINUS KNIVES: 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

THESE PILGRIMS, CARNIVAL, WITH THE BASH DOGS, THIS UNI, STORMHOUSE, WICKLOW ATWATER, LANITARIANS: 5:30 p.m., $10, all ages. The Locker Room at Garden Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544, gardenamp.com

TUNNELS, PASTE, POWER LUNCH, BLIVET: 8 p.m., $5, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

Saturday

THE DAN BAND: 7 p.m., $20, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

THE FRIGHTS, HUNNY, HOT FLASH HEATWAVE: 8 p.m., $25, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

MIKE PINTO: 5 p.m., $5-$10, all ages. The Locker Room at Garden Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544, gardenamp.com.

MONDLINK: 11 p.m., $15, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com

SPORTS: 9 p.m., $15, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com

Sunday

JESIRA VON RABBIT, SPINDRIFT, BELLA NOVELA, RATS IN THE LOUVRE: 2 p.m., $10, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

SCANDAL FROM JAPAN: 7 p.m., $40, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

SLAUGHTER BEACH, DOG: 9 p.m., $15, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

THA DOGG POUND: 8 p.m., $20, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com.

Monday

TOKYO LUCKY HOUR: 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com

Tuesday

AZEALIA BANKS: 8 p.m., $25, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

E-40: 7 p.m., $30, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

Wednesday

ALRIGHT SPIDER, LITRONIX, DBLIQUES: 7:30 p.m., $5, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com

BRASSTRACKS, FATHERDUDE: 9 p.m., $15, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

FLATTBUSH, WATCH ME BURN, BAD ACID TRIP, GUTSAW: 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

SLOTHRUST, SUMMER CANNIBALS: 9 p.m., $16, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com

Thursday, Sept. 13

EMONIGHTOC PRESENTS NOBLE (MEMBERS OF OH SLEEPER, CONFIDE, ATTACE ATTACK!, IN FEAR AND FAITH, AND AT THE SKYLINES): 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com

FUTURE ISLANDS, ED SCHRADER'S MUSIC BEAT: 9 p.m., $36, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

JUNGLE FIRE, BDULEVANDS: 8 p.m., $12-$15, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com

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In this workshop we will discuss the female sexual response cycle and how to have more frequent & more powerful orgasms using hands, mouths and sex toys for stimulation. We will cover clitoral stimulation, penetration and g-spot play as well as tips and techniques for anal and manual stimulation. Tickets are $15 per person or $25 per couple when prepaid by 9/12/18. If space is available, tickets will be $25 per person on the day of the workshop.

HOW TO GIVE A WORLD CLASS BLOWJOB
THURS. SEPT. 27TH @ 7:15PM

This workshop is open to women only. In this workshop you will learn tips and techniques for amazing handjobs and blowjobs! This is our most popular workshop and always sells out! So register early! Tickets are $20 each or bring a friend 2 for $30 when prepaid by 9/25/18.

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Shooting Stars

I'm a cis woman in my mid-40s, and my significant other has a cuckolding fetish. My first response was "Oh, hell no!" But if I'm willing to have a threesome, how much further of a stretch is it, really? He does have some experience with this varsity-level kink, so he knows what to expect. I've asked him some questions, but some things I prefer to research on my own. My questions for you: (1) I don't get cuckolding. I've read all about it, but nothing about it resonates with me. My SO really wants me to be into his fetish if I am going to act on it, but what if I'm just into being GGG? Can't that be enough? (2) How should I go about finding appropriate candidates who would be into sharing this experience with us? I'm not really sure that I'd want someone with experience as a bull because I don't feel good about this playing out the way I've seen it in porn. (3) We enjoy cross-dressing and chastity play. How do I find someone who will be cool about my SO sitting in the room in a cock lock and fingering? (4) I kind of have a "type" (don't we all), and I'm not certain my type plays into that kink. I prefer someone who is way dominant in public but submissive to me in the bedroom. This doesn't seem to align with your typical bull behavior. However, I do not enjoy being dominated. Do you think this matters?

Can't Understand Cuckold Kink

1. Cuckolding isn't that hard to understand: A cuckold gets off on their partner fucking other people and being humiliated or degraded by their partner and/or their partner's playmates. Seeing as you already enjoy dominating guys and threesomes, CUCK, what's not to enjoy about a cuckolding scenario?

2. Vanilla PIV intercourse rarely plays out in real life the way it does in porn. So whether you go with an experienced bull or find someone who's unfamiliar with cuckold play but game, you don't have to reenact whatever cuckold porn you've watched or read. Write your own script!

3. By using your words: CUCK. Tell any guy who's interested in being your very special guest star (VSGS) that your SO is a cuckold and he'll be there in lingerie with his cock locked up. If that turns a VSGS candidate off, then he's not the right VSGS for you.

4. In most cuckold porn, the bull—the man who fucks the cuck's wife or girlfriend (or boyfriend or husband) in front of him—is the dominant partner. But, again, you get to write your own script, and if you want your bull to be submissive, make that clear to your potential bulls.

I'm a 54-year-old gay guy living in New York City. I'm into bondage, and I have a profile on Recon with plenty of pictures showing what I'm into. A guy visiting from San Francisco cruised me. He asked me to send a face pic, and I did. He invited me to his hotel. He didn't have any gear with him, so I stopped to a hardware store and picked up $40 worth of rope and duct tape on my way to meet him. But after 30 seconds of small talk, he said he just wasn't feeling it. I said, "Okay, that happens," and I left. I'm totally confused. I'm a decent-looking guy, and the photo I sent is recent. I was freshly showered, so no hygiene or BO issues. Obviously, you can't force yourself to be into someone, but could he have handled it better? Should he have followed up with a message apologizing? Should I reach out and ask him what happened, or is that just pathetic?

Bondage Offer Not Delivered After Getting Evicted

Typically when this happens—photos exchanged, hookup arranged, mind changed—it's because the photos were out of date or were not representative. Since we aren't always the best judge of our own photos, BONDAGE you should ask a friend who won't bullshit you to look at your photos and give it to you straight.

If your no-bullshit friend clears your photos, then reach out to Mr. San Francisco. He had to make a snap decision when you arrived with that bag of rope and duct tape. Did he feel comfortable letting this stranger render him helpless? In a vanilla hookup, he could give it a little time and back out after some foreplay—it's a lot harder to back out when the foreplay involves rope and duct tape. So send him a message via Recon. Open by telling him you aren't buttsore or angry, and he had every right to change his mind, even to the last minute—which means he has nothing to apologize for so you aren't owed an apology and you shouldn't message him if you're seeking one.

Then ask if you said or did something that made him feel unsafe. If you did, BONDAGE, accept his feedback graciously—don't argue with him or attempt to litigate what went down. Just listen. It may not have been your intention to freak him out by making, say, a few serial-killer jokes, but his impression is what matters, not your intention. And who knows? A sincere effort to get a little constructive feedback may leave him feeling better about you and up for playing the next time he's in town.

My wife has a fantasy in which she's blindfolded and restrained on our bed. She hears the front door open, followed by footsteps coming up the stairs, and then she's ravished by ... who? She won't know, presumably, until it's over. My question: In fulfilling this fantasy for her, in which anonymity and surprise are part of the appeal, what do I tell her in advance? Do I discuss the entire scenario with her, so she knows exactly what's going to happen, minus the identity of the very special guest star (who would be a semi-regular we've played with before—but she wouldn't necessarily know that to first)? That seems to eliminate the surprise element of the fantasy. Is it enough to tell her, without mentioning the specific scenario, that I'd like to make one of her fantasies come true and ask her to trust me?

Ethical Thinking In Quite Unusual, Elaborate Tied Tight Enactment

Presumably? There's no room for "presumablies" when you're arranging to fulfill a varsity-level fantasy. I'm guessing she'd rather not know who's ravishing her before or during the big event, ETIQUETTE, and she may not want to know after. But you need to ask her what she wants—no presumptions—before you start making arrangements.

She might want to know everything in advance—including the identity of that stranger—or she might want you to decide everything. But you need to check in with her first: "Honey, I want to help you realize that fantasy—you're tied to the bed, a stranger arrives, you're ravished by said stranger—but I need to know how involved you want to be in the planning. Clear everything with you—where, when, who, how—or just make it happen?"

You may find that she wants to be surprised by who but not by when, ETIQUETTE, or by when but not by who—or by who but not by when, how or where. Or she may want the whole thing to be a surprise. But you have to find out exactly what she wants before you make any plans.

And here's a bonus pro tip for you. Don't reveal the identity of your VSGS immediately afterward. Because if it goes well, and your wife wants a repeat, you may be able to get a few more encounters out of your first VSGS.

SavageLove

» DAN SAVAGE

On the Lovecast *(savagelovecast.com), Dan chats with comedian Guy Branum about ass surgery. Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org*

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Korova's Always In Blüm

When we found out Korova was releasing three new strains exclusive to one of our favorite dispensaries in Orange County, we knew we would stop at nothing to get our hands on these coveted flowers. After an intense night of urban camping outside Blüm in Santa Ana to make sure nobody had a chance to try it before we could get our greedy hands on what was sure to be some choice nugs, the hour finally came.

We started with the aptly named Russian Collusion, its lineage stemming from Cherry AK-47 and the ever topical Trump OG, crossed with PCG Cookies. Limonene-heavy clusters of snowcapped buds will have you forgetting all about our Cheeto-haired Commander in Chief. Our cannabis journey went east next, from possible pee tapes to the elusive Siberian Tiger Mint Chocolate Chip and PCG Sherbet mix it up to give you a chest full of sticky, sweet relief that's hard to put down.

After setting our sights on Korova's last phenotype, however, we knew we had found our favorite. The Molotov Cocktail clocks in at a very solid 24.49 percent THC and packs a tropical punch that will send you straight to the beach—or maybe the couch.

COURTESY OF KOROVA

If you haven't had a chance to check out Blüm's impressive storefront, then you either don't love yourself or you live under a rock. The staff is wonderful, the showroom looks like a palace, and the product is top-notch. Be sure to stop by on Sept. 28 for the release of Korova's Lemon Sugar Kush, sure to be our next new favorite.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

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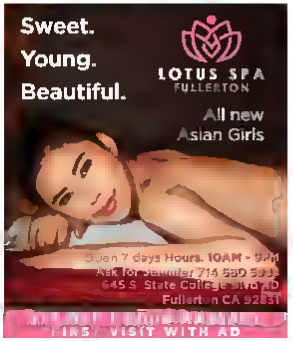
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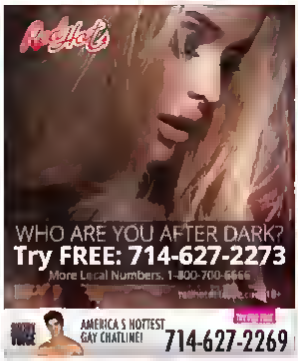
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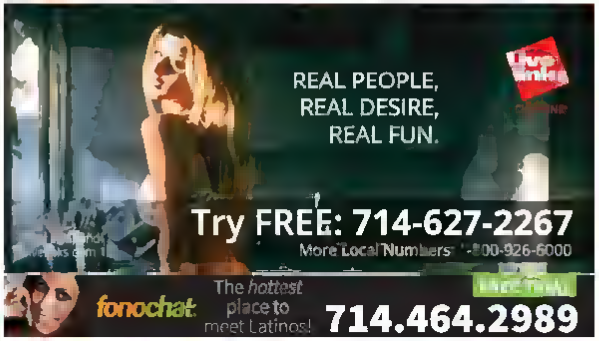
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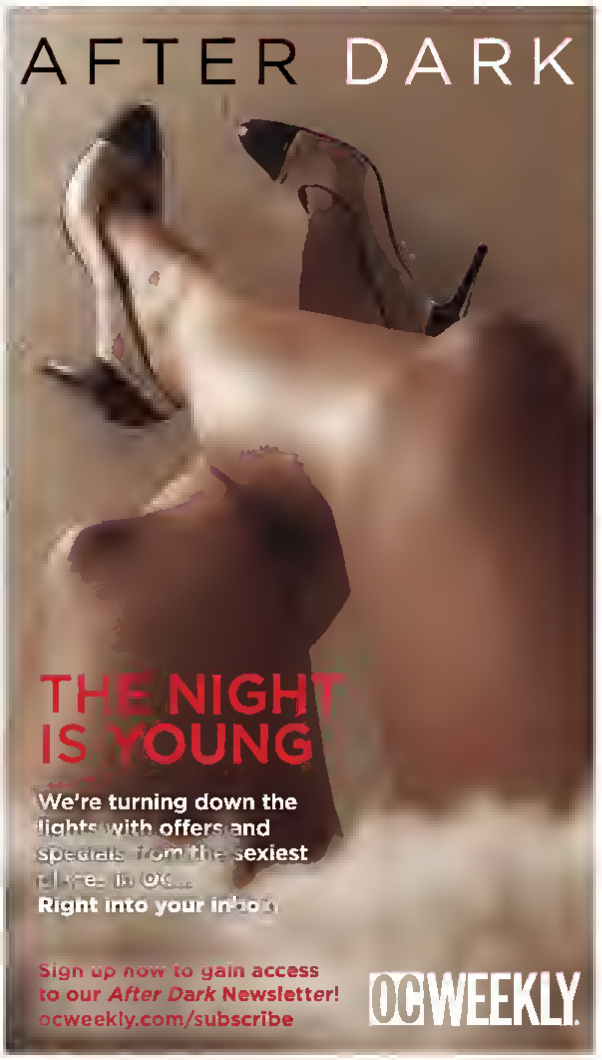
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Just Kid-ding

More than 20 years after worldwide fashion fame, artist Paul Frank is still Orange County's friend

BY TAYLOR HAMBY

"You know what? I'm going to have him wear a spacesuit when he does it," says cartoonist Paul Frank. The mind most famous for bringing the charismatic Julius the monkey to the world in the mid-1990s is in the middle of a brainstorm. He's scheming with his intern, Drew Tran, while explaining to a humble scribe from this infernal rag the process that goes into making a ladies handbag.

The quiet, vacant surroundings of the Orange Coast College (OCC) campus over summer break contrasts with the excited, sky-high ideas spewing out of Frank's brain with unrestrained creativity and reliable regularity.

"Oh we should totally do that," agrees Tran, sitting at a green patio table outside the college's stylish Fashion Building. The young Orange Coast College graduate has been apprenticing with Frank for three weeks, they're working on a project for an upcoming class for the Fullerton Museum Center in which students will learn how to design and create their own purse.

But first, back to the spacesuits. "We should get you a spacesuit, and then video [record it] and be like, 'Hey, we're in the computer—the robot lab!'" Frank suggests. "We get some dry ice, and we're walking in slow motion, like in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and we're holding our helmet."

"That'd be worth the cost of renting a spacesuit per day," Frank continues. "That's the kind of stuff that would bring good attention on social media."

That, ladies and gentlemen, is what you hire Frank for. Not for the most practical ideas, the simplest ideas, or the most cost-effective or rational ideas. It's those larger-than-life, grandiose, purely imaginative ideas that pop into his head and pour out onto paper, purses, Fender guitars and beach cruisers that have made Frank—and the characters he's created—worldwide household names.

"He's like a little kid playing," observes Tran. "He just has fun." That makes sense, as the company Frank created holds the trademark on the phrase "Remember to never grow up."

They were introduced to each other by mutual friend Chris Amaral, an instructor with OCC's fashion department; she has been supplying Paul Frank Industries with interns since shortly after the company launched from a Huntington Beach garage in the 1990s.

In those three decades, Frank has ridden the roller coaster of creative successes and cataclysms. All along the way, he has approached his career as a kid going to an amusement park on his birthday. Frank attributes a lot of the inspiration of Paul Frank Industries to Disneyland. "I got a lot of stuff from Disneyland," Frank says of what he calls his favorite place. "It was mostly the stuff you wouldn't think of. It wasn't, like, Mickey Mouse."

COURTESY CORKY NEPOMUCENO/FULLERTON MUSEUM CENTER

While many visitors are busy looking at sights such as Sleeping Beauty Castle or the nightly firework spectacular, Frank focused on the trash cans. The receptacles were once hand-pinstriped and decorated to match whichever section of the theme park they were in. Frank recalls being particularly inspired in the 1980s by a Space Mountain receptacle, incorporating a similar font in the Paul Frank Industries logo as an homage.

Frank talks of birthday visits to the Mouse house as a kid, his birthday money burning a hole in his pocket. "It was like that one day I was a star," he says. Whether he spent his birthday money or allowance on a Matchbox car or a raccoon tail from the Daniel Boone Story in Frontierland, Frank recognized the power of merchandising. "[At Disneyland], there's an eraser postcard, a sticker or a pencil, a patch," he says. "That's how I want Paul Frank stuff to be … something for everyone."

He also recognized Disneyland's ability to transport people to another world, making them forget about "the real world" even just for a minute. "You're in this whole of the world when you go there," he says. This inspiration was important to Paul Frank Industries from the beginning, including when it came time to build a booth for the company at the 1998 Action Sports Retailer show in Long Beach.

"This is important," Frank notes, "because a lot of people go to a convention, and they just sit at that table that the convention provides, with a black tablecloth on it and … a folding chair and then some room curtains in the background, and it's like, 'That's not fun!'"

Ever the antidote to "not fun," Frank made sure his booth was an experience worthy of Disneyland. With little money and even less experience, the fledgling company built a mock house in the shape of the brand's logo and decked it out with midcentury-modern furniture and even a cactus garden.

Taking a page out of Uncle Walt's book ultimately paid off for the brand, it received the best booth award and $500,000 in orders from that show.

Thirty years later, Frank says it's time to give back to the place that inspired him.

Now a resident of Los Angeles, he comes back to Orange County weekly to instruct a new generation of creatives. He has taught at the Art Institute of California's Costa Mesa campus and at OCC, where he took art classes in the 1990s.

Recently, the 51-year-old has also been having fun in Fullerton, another place near and dear to his heart. It's the birthplace of his beloved Fender Guitars, during his summer break between junior and senior years at Ocean View High School in Huntington Beach, Frank screen-printed shirts for Seal Beach's annual Rough Water Swim event to save up enough money to buy his first Stratocaster. The city was also home to the Hub, onetime stomping grounds for his garage band the Moseleys (the Slidebar stands there today).

And at the Fullerton Museum Center, he now teaches sold-out creative DIY workshops. Folks sign up for the $60 class without even knowing what they're making—such as the aforementioned handbag. It's a testament to the trust Frank has earned from his fans over the years to consistently create cool shit—and have fun while doing it.

"It's thrilling to make something different still [today], whether it's making it for a bunch of people or for 25 people at a time," Frank says of the classes. "There's something fun about showing up with these parts and doing stuff that nobody else does.

"That's what keeps me going in life," he continues. "That's my main goal."

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